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NUMBER 2

PROVERBIAL MATERIALS IN TOBIAS SMOLLETT, "THE ADVENTURES OF SIR LAUNCELOT GREAVES"

by ARCHER TAYLOR

THE FOLLOWING COLLECTION of proverbs, proverbial phrases, and proverbial comparisons used by Tobias Smollett will supplement the texts available for historical and comparative studies. Although collectors have excerpted Smollett's more famous novels somewhat casually, they have taken very little from *The Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves*. Published serially in 1760 and 1761, this novel offers some early instances of proverbs (Facts are facts), some texts of interest for their own sake (Davy Jones in the shape of a blue flame), some rare versions (The braying ass eats little grass), and some items that are apparently otherwise unknown (Not to know a cat from a capstan; Marry hap, worse ware may have a better chap). But I shall pick no more plums from my cake.

Annotation has been limited to references to standard authorities: G. L. Apperson, *English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases* (London, [1929]); J. S. Farmer and W. E. Henley, *Slang and Its Analogues* (7 v., London, 1890-1904); W. G. Smith and Janet E. Heseltine, *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs* (2d ed., Oxford, 1948); Burton E. Stevenson, *The Home Book of Proverbs, Maxims and Familiar Phrases* (New York, 1948); Morris P. Tilley, *A Dictionary of Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor, 1950); F. A. Stoett, *Nederlandsche spreekwoorden, spreekwijzen, uitdrukkingen en gezegden* (4th ed., Zutphen, 1923-1925) and (for comparisons) T. Hilding Svartengren, *Intensifying Similes in English* (Lund, 1918); Archer Taylor, *Proverbial Comparisons and Similes from California*, *Folklore Studies*, 3 (Berkeley, 1954). References to Smollett's novel are to the Shakspeare Head edition

(Oxford, 1926). References to Stoett and Tilley are by number; all other references are by page.

Apple. Han't I . . . cherished thee as the apple of mine eye? (p. 94). Deut. 32: 10; Prov. 7:2; Ps. 17:8. NED Apple 7; Stevenson 86: 3, citing Cicero; Stoett 101, 1697; Tilley A290. For discussion see M. B. Ogle *Transactions of the American Philological Association* LXIII (1942) 181-191.

Aspen leaf. His lips trembling like an aspen leaf (p. 26); He sheakes and shivers like an aspen leaf (p. 90). Apperson 18; Oxford 15; Stevenson 788:11, Svartengren 382; Tilley L140, cf. W767.

Ass, 1. The braying ass eats little grass (p. 115). Cf. Stevenson 106:6; Tilley A359 The ass that brays most eats least.

2. They stood motionless, in the state of the schoolman's ass between two bundles of hay (pp. 97-98.) Oxford 154; Stevenson 1234:5.

Barber. One barber shaves not so close, but another finds a few stubble (p. 115). Apperson 25; Oxford 22; Stevenson 2085:5; Tilley B70.

Bear. The former was dragged upstairs like a bear to the stake (p.24 9).

Bilander. Fingers . . . crooked, d'ye see, like the knees of a bilander (p. 5). A bilander is a "two-masted merchant vessel" (NED, s.v.).

Black. My husband would have bit off his tongue rather than say black is the white of your eye (p. 131). Apperson 52; Oxford 48; Stevenson 191:9.

Bowls. Chapter Ten Which Showeth that he who plays at bowls, will sometimes meet with rubbers (p. 107). Apperson 62; Oxford 504; Stevenson 227:9; Tilley B569.

Bread. At that rate, said the squire, my bread is like to be rarely buttered o' both sides, i' faith (p. 90). Apperson 64; Oxford 61; Stevenson 235:4; Tilley B623.

Brew. As you brew you must drink (p. 115). Apperson 67; Oxford 64; Stevenson 240-241:10; Tilley B654.

Bush. Without repetition, tautology, circumlocution, or going about the bush (p. 23). Apperson 31; Oxford 27; Stevenson 659:2; Tilley B742.

Butt. The brewer was . . . round as a butt of beer (p. 230). Svar-tengren 280 (tun); Taylor *Comparisons* 69 (barrel).

Cake. There's no cake, but there's another of the same make (p. 116). Apperson 77; Oxford 75; Stevenson 273:9; Tilley C14.

Calm. But this, as you sea-faring people say, was a deceitful calm, that soon ushered in a dreadful storm (p. 48).

Cape Margery. I shall haul up close to the wind, and mayhap we shall clear Cape Margery (p. 253). The phrase means "avoid matrimony."

Capon. You wanted to catch a capon, and you've stole a cat (p. 116).

Cat. A snotty-nosed lubberly boy, that knows not a cat from a capstan (p. 145). The word "cat" probably means "a contrivance for raising an anchor" (NED Cat 7). Cf. Stevenson 1329:5 cowlstaff.

Chicken. 1. He has no more courage than a chicken (p. 61). Cf. NED Chicken 3 b; Tilley C290.

2. Chicken-hearted (p. 23). NED Chicken-heart, Chicken-hearted.

Child. 1. As little acquainted with the world as a sucking child (p. 2).

2. As innocent as the child unborn (p. 82). Taylor *Comparisons* 51.

Climb. Who never climbed, never fell (p. 116). Cf. Apperson 102; Oxford 449; Stevenson 747:10; Tilley C412.

Cloud. After clouds comes clear weather (p. 116). Apperson 103; Oxford 4; Stevenson 2222:2; Tilley C442.

Crow. What, yaw look as if yaw was crow-trodden, you do (p. 217). NED Crow-tread.

Davy Jones. I have seen Davy Jones in the shape of a blue flame, d'ye see, hopping to and fro on the sprit-sail yard arm (p. 84). Cf. (citing no close parallel) Stevenson 2092:6.

Day. I'se make yaw know your churning days, I wool (pp. 216-217).

Devil. Like the man between the devil and the deep sea (p. 281).

This suggests an allusion to a familiar story or scene. The parallels do not ordinarily refer to a man in this situation; see Apperson 143; Oxford 138; Stevenson 575-576:18; Tilley D222.

Duckweed. It was as common as duck-weed (p. 62).

Ear. But I lent a deaf ear to her request (p. 241). Stevenson 497:1; Tilley E13.

Elephant. Though the fellow is as strong as an elephant (p. 61). Svartengren 392; Taylor *Comparisons* 78.

Evil. Of two evils choose the least (p. 281). Apperson 654; Oxford 181; Stevenson 715:11-716:5; Stoett 1304; Tilley E207.

Fact. Facts are facts, as the saying is (p. 23). Stevenson 742:15.

Father. I'se a poor Yorkshire tyke, and would no more cheat the stars, than I'd cheat my own vather, as the saying is (p. 250).

Feather. You could almost have heard a feather drop to the ground (p. 35).

Fig, 1. Who kears a vig for the voolish tantrums? (p. 40). Cf. Eric Partridge *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (4th ed., London [1951] 274.

2. I value no minister a vig's end (p. 101). Tilley F210.

Flap. Your honour has a mortal good hand at giving a flap with a fox's tail, as the saying is (p. 87). Apperson 218; Oxford 208; Stevenson 883-884:11; Tilley F344.

Flea. He has not left so much blood as would fatten a straved flea (p. 14).

Fowl. You'll find I'm a Crowe, not a Raven, thof indeed they be both fowls of a feather, as the saying is (p. 253). Ordinarily "birds of a feather"; see Apperson 48; Oxford 45; Stevenson 1430:3; Tilley B393.

Foot. I can run upon the foot after my game without being in fault, as the saying is (p. 24).

Good. We gave 'em as good as they brought, and so parted (p. 137). Apperson 247; Stevenson 955: 4; Tilley G122.

Grandam. Go and teach your grannum to crack filberds (p. 13). Cf. Oxford 645; Tilley G406, G407.

Ground. The unfortunate agressor was fain to bite the ground (p. 99).

Gunpowder. The young squire, who was as hasty as gunpowder (p. 38).

Hair. [She] would fit me to a hair (p. 85); She . . . said the cunning man described to a hair the person that should be her true lover (p. 247). Tilley H26.

Haman. Hanged as high as Haman (p. 101).

Hell. Dark as hell (p. 6). Svartengren 237.

Heart. It would have moved a heart of stone (p. 36). Tilley H311 (as hard as).

Here. But they [lands and tenements] are neither here nor there, I doubt (p. 129). Oxford 448; Stevenson 1133-1134: 8; Tilley H438.

Home. A fever, which, in a few days, brought Sir Everhard to his long home (p. 50). Eccl. 12:5. Apperson 379; Oxford 381; Tilley H533.

Horse. 1. A horse that was foaled of an acorn (p. 88). A gallows. See Apperson 311; Oxford 306; Stevenson 930:2; Tilley H708.

2. I be so hongry, I could eat a horse behind the saddle (p. 185). Oxford 311; Stevenson 1201:6.

3. I think as haw yawrs [how yours] bean't a butcher's horse, a doan't carry calves well (p. 216).

House. Thatch your house with t--d, and you'll have more teachers than reachers (p. 175). Oxford 648; Tilley H761.

Knot. He should prove that his honour had tied a knot with his

tongue, which he could not untie with all his teeth (p. 89). Apperson 345-346; Oxford 658; Stevenson 1318:9; Tilley K167.

Large. If we can't go large, we must haul up a wind, as the saying is (p. 75).

Leaf. The justice . . . afterwards turned over a new leaf from remorse (p. 141). Apperson 652; Oxford 676; Stevenson 1374:1; Tilley L146.

Lightning. The horses being young . . . ran away with the carriage, like lightning (p. 39).

Live. You knows, master, one must live, and let live, as the saying is (p. 182). Apperson 375; Oxford 376; Stevenson 1408:7; Tilley L380.

Lobster. Dead as a boil'd lobster (pp. 253-254). Svartengren 147 red lobster.

Louse. I value not the ministry three skips of a louse, as the zaying is (p. 100). Apperson 629; Stevenson 2644:3, 2645:5; Tilley L472 Not worth a louse, S512 three skips.

Man. Every man must eat, thof at another's expense (p. 183).

Lodgings. He that takes up his lodgings in a stable, must be contented to lie upon litter (p. 116).

Master. Trimtram, like master, like man (p. 148). Apperson 366-367 Like master, like man, 646 Trim tram . . .; Oxford 412 Like master, like man, T671 Trim tram, . . . Stevenson 1547:4, Tilley M723 Like master, like man, T525 Trim, Tram, . . .

Nutshell. I'll warrant her tight [chaste] as a nut-shell (p. 145). Cf. Taylor *Comparisons* 82 as tight as a nut in a shell.

Old. He thought he wa'n't too old to learn (p. 86). Apperson 442; Oxford 450; Stevenson 1378:6; Tilley L153.

Old Scratch. Because he must have sold himself to old scratch (p. 247).

Paper. His face as white as paper (p. 26). Svartengren 231.

Patience. Patience is a good stream-anchor, and will hold, as the saying is (p. 112).

Rawhead. Who have we got here? said her, raw head and bloody bones? (p. 208). Archer Taylor, "Raw Head and Bloody Bones," *Journal of American Folklore* LXIX (1956) 114, 175.

Roland. But I hope as how you will give them a Rowland for their Oliver (p. 148). Apperson 536-537; Oxford 547; Stevenson 2003: 3; Tilley R195.

Rose. Freshly fragrant, and blushing like the rose (p. 31).

Salve. There's a salve for every sore (p. 174). Apperson 549; Oxford 560; Stevenson 2032:10; Tilley S84; B. J. Whiting *Proverbs in the Earlier English Drama* (Cambridge, Mass. 1938) 241.

Sing. If we can't sing, we must pray (p. 75).

Sloe. Han't I currycombed thy carcass till it was as sleek as a sloe? (p. 94).

Snow. Teeth as white as the drifted snow (p.14). Cf. Taylor *Comparisons* 87 snow, 88 driven snow.

Soul, 1. As I'm a precious saowl (p. 59).

2. As sure as I'm a living soul (pp. 87, 90, 136).

Sow, 1. Yaw mought as well tell me, for every zow there's a zir-reverence (p. 174).

2. It becomes him as a sow doth a cart-saddle (p. 87). Apperson 591; Oxford 608; Stevenson 2175:12; Tilley S672.

3. Crabshaw pointing to him, told her he believed she had got the right sow by the ear (p 247). Apperson 715; Oxford 607; Stevenson 2175-2176:13; Tilley S684.

Star. I saw nothing but the stars at noon (p. 112). The phrase means "to be dazed by a blow."

Statue. Motionless as a statue (p. 151). Svartengren 383; Tilley S834 mute, quiet.

Stomach. He had no great stomach to the match (p. 252).

Sweetheart. A sea-faring man may have a sweet-heart in every port; but he should steer clear of a wife; as he would avoid a quicksand (p. 238). Stevenson 2025:10.

Tag. Your tag, rag and bob tail (p. 131). Apperson 616; Oxford 638; Stevenson 2268:3, Tilley T10.

Tooth. Locking the door, to it they went tooth and nail (p. 26). Apperson 6641; Oxford 200; Stevenson 2352-2353:11; Tilley T422.

Virtue. She made a virtue of necessity (p. 246). Apperson 663, Oxford 688; Stevenson 1668-1669:4; Tilley V73.

Ware. Marry hap, worse ware may have a better chap, as the saying goes (p. 179).

Wild-fire. The news of his return spread like wild-fire (p. 34).

Wind. Aha! old boy, is the wind in that corner? (p. 282). Apperson 690; Oxford 712; Stevenson 2515:7; Tilley W419.

Wink. He therefore tipped Clarke the wink with one side of his face, while the other was very gravely turned to the captain (p. 71). Farmer and Henley VII 132-134; Stevenson 2528:2.

Yorkshire hug. [He] saluted the other with a Yorkshire hug, that layed him across the body of his companion (p. 152).

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THE MARITAL STATUS OF CHILD BALLAD HEROINES

by VIRGINIA DOBER

THE GENERAL BALLAD reader's first impression of the women in the ballads may be one of shock, disgust, horror, or utter fascination. They appear noble, lewd, loose, loyal, immoral, common, and/or insensitive. They are almost always at odds with the acceptable social behavior of today; but the secret is that they were creatures of *another* day. We cannot judge them by our codes, they must be viewed in the light of their own mores.

It is doubtless true, as anthropologists have pointed out, that in the history of the race "marriage is rooted in the family rather than the family in marriage."¹ The Celts, it has been said, are charged with a neglect of their women, and a disregard for the proper regulation of the married state, that could but ill accord with the condition of a people in any degree civilized.² During the heyday of balladry there were three marital states for women: the legal wife, the love wife (morganatic), and the concubine.

The courtship, marriage rites, and family life of balladry seem extremely primitive, base and crude to our civilization. These arrangements were not tedious among the Celts and other tribes. They were simply the means for gratification of the sex drive, and all else, save money, was extraneous.

The people in the Highlands of Scotland and in the border country of both Scotland and England had a relatively free choice of lovers from earliest times until in the eighteenth century. The Celts were considered by the Romans to hold women in common, to practice polygamy, to practice wife exchanges once or twice a year, to let the king have a free choice of women, and to be married (when and if) for only a year and a day. This latter bond is known in Scotland as "handfasting" and corresponds to bundling. Many of these notions were erroneous or distorted, such as the length of the "legal" marriage. In reality, that was the length of the trial marriage (handfasting), which later deteriorated into night visits. Promiscuity was not sanc-

¹*Encyclopedia Britannica* (New York, 1926), p. 753.

²James Logan, *The Scottish Gael* (Hartford, 1855), p. 472.

tioned, but relations with one selected person were approved only as long as there was a relatively serious tone evidenced.

The night visits were evidently sanctioned as long as the young man was in a favorable position either because of wealth, prestige, or might. In Child ballad 69 Clerk Saunders is killed in bed by the girl's seven brothers; in 70, Willie is killed by Lady Maisry's father; and in 71 there is a reverse in that the lover kills the three brothers. Brown Robin (97) makes his humorous escape in the morning by disguising as a maid-in-waiting. Glasgerion (67) makes the necessary arrangements with the princess only to be duped by his "little foot-page," who behaved most unseemly. The rooster always played the role of the guardian of the day, and in the charming aube, "The Grey Cock" (248), there is an amusing incident in which he crowed an hour too soon. This custom of the night visit was intended for the unmarried couple but in practice one or both of the parties might be married. "Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard" (81) is a good example of this.

The Highlanders gave dowers with their daughters upon marriage according to their means—cattle, provisions, farmstocking, etc. The portion of the bride was called a *tocher*.³ In the rough ballad country the custom later evolved that in the event of the death of the wife the dower should be returned to her family within one year of her demise. This was a form of protection from "professional bridegrooms" who had an eye on the pocketbook. Gil Brenton's (5) bride came with "Full sevenscore o ships" and Lord Thomas's (73) brother says:

"The nut-browne bride has oxen, brother,
The nut-browne bride has kye;
I wad hae ye marrie the nut-browne bride,
And cast Fair Annet bye."

The knight in 110 happily finds the shepherd's daughter he is forced to marry has houses and lands and a duke for a father. The maid in 89 steals five hundred pounds plus "all other iuells and chaines" for her dower, and Andrew Lammie and Annie meet a tragic end "Because she has five thousand marks, And I have not a penny." "Jean O Bethelnie" (238) ends with:

³J. Logan, *op. cit.*, p. 473.

Her beauty was charming, her tocher down tauld;
Bonnie Jean of Bethelny was scarce fifteen year auld;

and Thomas o Yonderdale (253) magnanimously sends his legal bride-to-be home in a coach, whereas she came on horseback.

In spite of the seeming looseness of ballad mores, however, there was room for disobedience to parents. In Trevisa's *Bartholomew* we find: "The fathers herte is sore greved, if his chyldren rebel ayenst hime." Langland, in *Piers Plowman*, traced the lack of discipline to the parents' indulgence of children whom they feared to lose to the Plague. In fact, it is possible that, during the pestilence, the materialistic spirit of the age destroyed any beneficial influence which chivalry might have exercised on woman's status in the upper classes, or on the Church's conditional consecration of marriage for all classes.⁴ We have examples of wayward daughters in 24, 67, 100, 110, 113, 217, 240, and 269 of the Child ballads. Bonnie Annie steals her father and mother's gold and elopes, and in "Willie of Winsbury" the old king says to his daughter:

"Cast ye off your berry-brown gown,
Stand straight upon the stone,
That I may ken ye by yere shape,
Whether ye be a maiden or none."

It appears from this and other sources that girls were considered "maids" until they were with young regardless of past experiences. In "The Broom of Cowdenknows" (217-B) the farmer questions his milkmaid daughter thus:

Now where hae you been, my ae doughter?
I am sure you was nae your lane;

and in "Lady Diamond" (269):

The king went on to Lady Daisy's bower,
Just like a wandering ghaist.
He has drawn the curtains round and round,
And there he has sat him down;
'To whom is this, Lady Daisy,' he says,
'That now you go sae round?'

⁴D. Chadwick, *Social Life in the Days of Piers Plowman* (Cambridge, 1922), p. 102.

From these examples we may infer that the fathers were truly solicitous of their daughters' welfare and future happiness.

There were backfires as a result of the children's waywardness or disobedience. Burd Ellen (28) and the lass in "The Rantin Laddie" with their illegitimate children are forsaken by their lovers. Jellon Grame (90) kills his mistress, who is pregnant, and Mary Hamilton (173) commits infanticide. In "The Twa Sisters" (10) the elder sister murders the younger because of jealousy over a suitor; the princess in "Leesome Brand" (15), who had been living a loose life since she was ten, dies and is saved only by a miracle; and Lady Isabel (261) is forced to drink poison because of incest with her father.

According to Langland, marriage was regarded as a purely business arrangement, and though this was no novelty in the later fourteenth century, it is possible that it was accentuated during those hard years when wealth was the first object with many men.⁵ Women were regarded as mere chattels, entitling their owners to a certain amount of property. Landowners arranged their children's marriages with a view to acquiring further possessions. Squires and knights sought wealth rather than beauty, birth, or manners.⁶ Old Robin of Portingale (80) made such an unwise match and almost lost his life, and Katharine Jaffray (221) would have been ill-matched had she not been stolen by the Laird of Lauderdale.

There was a difference in the legal marriage requirements for Scotland and England. English law states:

... at 14 both sexes are held to have arrived at years of discretion, and may therefore choose guardians, give evidence and consent or disagree to a marriage. A female has the last privilege from the 12th year, but the marriage cannot be celebrated until the majority of the parties without the consent of the parents.⁷

The Marriage Act of 1835 clarifies this by saying: "A marriage in which either of the parties is below the age of consent is, however, said to be not absolutely void; if the parties agree to continue together at the age of consent no new marriage is necessary, but either of them may disagree and avoid the marriage."

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Encyclopedia Britannica, op. cit.*, p. 372.

"Habit and repute" has sometimes been spoken of as constituting marriage in the law of Scotland, but it is more correctly described as evidence from which marriage may be inferred. The chief point of distinction of Scottish marriage law, as compared with English law, is the recognition of irregular marriages. A public or regular marriage is one celebrated after due proclamation of banns, by a minister of religion; and it may be celebrated either in a church or in a private house, and on any day of the week at any hour of the day. The ministers of the National Church at first alone could perform the ceremony; but the privilege was extended to Episcopalians by 10 Anne c.7 (1711), and to other ministers by 4 and 5 Will. IV c.28 (1834). A marriage may also "be constituted by declarations made by the man and woman that they presently do take each other for husband and wife. These declarations may be emitted on any day at any time and without the presence of witnesses and either by writing or orally or by signs, and in any form which is clearly expressive of intention. Such a marriage is as effectual to all intents and purposes as a public marriage." The children of it would be legitimate; and the parties of it would have all the rights in the property of each other, given by the law of Scotland to husband and wife. A promise followed by *copula* does not constitute marriage, unless if followed either by solemnization *in facie ecclesiae* or *declarator*.

A Scottish bride was expected to show a reluctance and require a certain degree of violence, which was neither thought unbecoming in the man, nor a hardship to the woman; many instances being found of happy unions, accompanied with apparent force and cruelty. The practice was sometimes, however, carried too far, the real violence which was used consisted of the raptus, or forcible abduction of women, of which so many instances occur in the legal history of the country. "Earl Brand" (7) and "Katharine Jaffray" (221) are examples of bride-stealing and "Child Waters" (63) is the prime example of mistreatment.

Our use of the wedding ring can be traced back to the Celts, for the ring was the badge of the married state and was worn both in Gaul and Britain on the middle finger.⁸

The sphere of the medieval woman seems to have been far wider than that assigned to her by ecclesiastical or chivalrous ideals. A

⁸J. Logan, *op. cit.*, p. 474.

highborn lady shared many of the landowner's responsibilities and pleasures. The middle-class woman was unaffected by chivalrous ideals. According to Langland's account, she was her own mistress in work-room and tavern; cheating her employees and customers and increasing her profits and custom as she pleased.⁹

In "Willie's Lady" (6) the power of the mother is evidenced as it is in "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" (73) and "Edward" (13-B). The strong border-wife is seen in "Geordie" (209), "Captain Car" (178), and "Johnie Armstrong" (169).

Divorce was much more prevalent than is currently realized. This is probably the solution of "The Bonnie Wee Croodlin Dow" (13-J). In theory, divorce found no place in Church law, but the complexities of Canon Law, with its strange mixture of unreasonable severity and unreasonable license, afforded one thousand opportunities of proving that the marriage had never been legal.¹⁰

The term "morganatic marriage" is applied generally to any marriage of a person of royal blood to one of inferior rank. The origin of the term, in medieval Latin *matrimonium ad morganaticam*, is usually taken to refer to the *Morgengabe*, i.e., the morning gift, made by a husband to his wife on marriage. "Fair Annie" (62) is the best example of this institution. Lord Thomas tells her that he is going to bring a new bride home for "Wi her I will get gowd and gear; Wi you I neer got nane." The legal rights of the children of morganatic unions varied in place and time.

It later became the custom to have these marriages semi-legal. A marriage ceremony would be performed, but the groom offered the bride his left hand instead of right, and so the term "left-handed marriage" occurs. In "Willie O. Winsbury" (100) the girl's father asks Willie, "Will ye marry my daughter Janet, By the truth of thy right hand?"

Concubinage was widely accepted for a time in earlier days in Scotland and by early Church founders. It was recognized as a "necessary evil." Concubinage is the state of man and woman cohabiting as married persons without the full sanctions of legal marriage. In modern society it is known as a "common law" union. We have instances cited in "Thomas O Younderdale" (253), "Child Waters" (63), "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" (73), and "The Three Ravens" (26), to name a few.

⁹D. Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 103.

The ladies of the ballads were in all probability not the frail, insipid creatures pictured and idealized in the later romances. Their "lily-white hands" could spin, milk, sew, weild pollaxes, nurse, do field work, *ad. inf.* Their "ruby-red lips" quieted young ones, kissed husbands and paramours, drank human blood, and could engage in conversation that would cause a gentleman of today to blush. Their "faire bodies" and "middles sae jimp" probably never had a good bath, were sewn within their underwear, and wore the same garments for months on end. These ladies have been scorned, maligned, and ridiculed, but they still ironically remain the "weaker sex" and stay most of the time in the background. They will forever be a monument to the daring, endurance, courage, and lustiness of the ballad woman.

Radford, Virginia

SOME EXAMPLES OF "THE CANTE FABLE IN DECAY"

by KENNETH PORTER

A FEW YEARS ago I had occasion to go through the back-files of several folklore publications, number by number and almost item by item, in search of material on two special subjects; as a by-product of my investigation I discovered that articles in one journal frequently supplemented those in another.

An article in the *Southern Folklore Quarterly* on which I found supplementary material in the English *Folk-Lore*, as well as in my own family traditions, was Herbert Halpert's "The *Cante Fable* in Decay."¹ Prof. Halpert pointed out that "the *cante fable*, the tale interspersed with song," had degenerated into "tales in which rhymes are imbedded" and ultimately, in most surviving specimens, into the rhymes alone, or the rhymes with very sparse prose narrative background.

"The Green Lady: A Folktale from Hertfordshire," reported by A. B. Gomme,² is a specimen of what was evidently once a *cante fable* in which degeneration has not gone so far but that one can observe something of the process. Although, as printed, only one snatch of song or rhyme survives, and that, accordingly to the editor, in a mutilated form, a careful reading of the text will speedily reveal that much more of the narrative was originally in the form of verse. For example, the heroine, desiring to enter the service of "the green lady," says: "I can bake, and I can brew, and about the house can all things do;" looking through a forbidden key-hole, she exclaims: "Oh, what can I see, a green lady dancing with a bogey!"; and when taxed by "the green lady" with spying on her, she replies mendaciously: "Nothing can I see, nothing can I spy; nothing can I see till the days high die [day I die]." Obviously these lines call for merely a different arrangement and perhaps the slightest of revision to become verses. A good deal more of the prose text could probably be versified with only a little effort and ingenuity. A briefer

¹V (Sept., 1941), 191-200.

²*Folk-Lore*, VII (1896), 411-414.

version of the same tale from Norfolk, reported by W. B. Gerish,³ also contains prose lines which, in a slightly earlier stage, were evidently verse.

Several related specimens of "the *cante fable* in decay" presented by Prof. Halpert are songs sung by laborers at their work in Cumberland, Minnesota, and elsewhere, changing as the quality and quantity of the food furnished them were improved. *Folk-Lore*⁴ furnishes another example. The three stages in the cuisine and the corresponding exertions in the field are thus described:

Bread and cheese, work as you please.

Plum pudden and apple pie,
Do your work accordingly.

Roast beef and plum pudden,
Do your work like a good un.

Prof. Halpert also gives an example from Maine of a satirical recognition in a grace-before-meat of the marked improvement in the menu brought about by a change in the character of the guests. The original guest, an old farmer, called upon to say grace when the minister unexpectedly arrives (an unrealistic situation, this, since if any guest were called upon to say grace in those circumstances it would be the minister himself), recognizes the improvement in the following words:

O Lord be praised, I am amazed
To see things so quick amended;
(Roast pork and pies) delight my eyes
When (mush and milk) were intended!

Prof. Halpert points out that this specimen of the *cante fable* is also in the anti-clerical tradition of medieval song and story. My father, however, who was born in Ohio in 1860, of Scotch-Irish ancestors who had settled earlier in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, and who was brought up in Iowa, used to tell a very similar

³*Ibid.*, 414-415.

⁴VIII (1897), 395-396.

story which was intended to reflect not on the clergy but rather on the frivolous and worldly.

A serious-minded and religious young man called one Sunday afternoon upon a couple of rather gay although entirely respectable young women, perhaps sisters, at any rate living together. They were not particularly attracted to this sober young man, but, as the supper hour approached, they nevertheless felt that they should invite him to stay; this they did, informing him, however, that they were going to have just mush and milk. But, as they were about to sit down to this frugal fare, a rather worldly young man, with whom the two young ladies were highly impressed, drove up in his carriage. The mush-and-milk was hastily set aside, and the young ladies flew about, mixing and baking a batch of biscuits, brewing a pot of tea, opening a jar of preserves, spreading the table with a white cloth, and making other preparations. When they finally sat down at the table, the hostesses felt that, in view of the day and the presence of the religious-minded original guest, grace should be asked, so they called on him to return thanks. What was their surprise not unmingled with embarrassment when he delivered the following unusual grace:

O Lord of Love, look down from above
And see how things are amended!
Short-cake and tea for supper I see
When mush and milk were intended.

"The Two Suitors,"⁵ a North Carolina version, in which the characters are a poor man and a rich man, utilizes a very similar grace, although the first lines are related rather to the Halpert version:

The Lord be praised,
I am amazed
To see how things have mended,
For supper I see
Shortcake and tea
Where mush and milk were intended.

⁵Newman Ivey White, editor, *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore*, I (Durham, 1952), 702.

Some examples of the *cante fable* given by Prof. Halpert are so far "in decay" that the "interspersed song" is confined to a single verse-passage at the end of a tale which is otherwise entirely in prose. My father, during my Kansas boyhood, probably about 1915-1920, used to tell a story which is at least as much of a *cante fable* as the stories about menu changes being recognized in laborers' songs and satirical graces—and is even closer in the respect that the rhyming passage is actually sung, or at least chanted, instead of being merely recited. I have never seen the story in print, but heard it told about 1922 or 1923 by a fellow student in Sterling, Kansas.

A colored minister from a slum section decided to visit some of the larger white churches to get ideas for the improvement of his own services. He wandered into either a Catholic or a High Anglican service and was much impressed by the white vestments, the chanting, the carrying of crosses and banners, and particularly the swinging of a censer. On his return to his parish he set about reproducing these regalia and ceremonies as best he could, recruiting his altar boys from the incipient juvenile delinquents living in the vicinity of his shabby little church. On the morning set for the inauguration of this innovation in church ritual, the altar boys marched in according to schedule, wearing their improvised vestments and carrying their make-shift processional crosses and banners—all except the boy who was to have carried the "censer," who appeared empty-handed. The minister, not wishing to interrupt the service but concerned over the omission, chanted, in time with the chanting of the altar boys:

What did you do with the incense pot?

to which the boy replied, also in perfect time:

Left it in the hall—it was too dam' hot!

University of Illinois

RITUAL IN GEORGIA

by GERALD WEALES

AN ANNUAL SEMI-RELIGIOUS festival, Homecoming Day, appears to be indigenous to the American college, at least, to those colleges which practice the neomystery play, the football contest. The festival celebrated at Georgia Tech on October 25, 1952, at which I was fortunate to be present as a semi-official observer, will serve in this paper as an example of a much more general phenomenon. Tech's Homecoming Day, the celebration of the cult of the Yellow Jacket, shares certain particulars with similar festivals all over the country; in other ways it is unique.

Although the diety in whose honor these rites are held is personified differently in each college, his variant forms are not so divergent as to make impossible the recognition of an archetype—school spirit. When this god is considered in the abstract, he seems to be of the patriarchal galaxy of gods. His celebration is strongly masculine. The athletic contest which is at the heart of the festival is usually described in terms of more serious combat; both the participants and the spectators are expected to assume an air of excess heartiness which is the external evidence of a spiritual investiture. Yet, specifically this masculine spirit becomes confused with a feminine deity, *alma mater*. Perhaps there is a genuine jurisdictional division, one as old as Ge and Uranus, which allows the mother goddess to reign over the college proper and the god, school spirit, to hover above; more probably the masculine and feminine are joined and rule together as a sexless duonity. Since *alma mater* sometimes suggests the possibility of education and since the educative function of the college is in no way connected with Homecoming Day, the worship is centered on the masculine spirit. Incidentally, however, the festival celebrates certain virtues, gridiron lares and penates, the demi-gods of loyalty and courage.

The individual personifications of the school spirit, one for each cult or college, ordinarily take the form of animals, a process as old as Cerberus or Baal's calf. In most cases the ritual makes use of the live animal, as the Army mule or the Yale bulldog, rather

than of an iconic representation; Columbia College reverts to a more primitive form—a man dressed as a lion. Georgia Tech is unusual in that it is one of the few colleges whose cult symbol is an insect. Perhaps because Tech is an engineering school, a mechanized image has been developed; a model airplane painted to resemble a yellow jacket, manipulated by two steel wires, goes through a ritual performance between the halves of most of the football games. Plastic or painted representations of the holy insect appear in number on the campus for Homecoming Day.

Of course, the mysteries of the football season are celebrated from September until New Year's Day, but Homecoming Day is peculiar in that the rites of that day officially join the present participants of the cult with those who have graduated into new ritual patterns. The active members of the cult are, of course, those students who are at present undergraduates in the college. These serve as hosts to the graduated cultists and also as symbolic go-between through whom those once inspired may again receive the visitation of the spirit. Since this god, school spirit, seems to prefer to speak through the young men, the Homecoming Day, a return ritual, is a token return to a lost youth. The return must be achieved artificially by the involvement in the activities—dances, parades, etc.—of the young men, by the reenactment of old scenes and the reinstatement in old surroundings—the class reunion, by the wearing or carrying of emblems—banners, badges, chrysanthemums. The most obvious inducement of this semimystic state is alcohol; students of comparative religion have recognized that the mixture of intoxicants with religious ecstasy is integral to some rituals, as those of Bali, for instance. It is not unusual then that the flask has become a part of the celebration of Homecoming Day.

The central mystery of the whole festival, one that corresponds say to the dramatic performances of the Dionysiac festival, is the football game. In the afternoon, the festival participants gather in the ovular stadium (*alma mater* again) to watch the members of the priesthood, the team, perform. This ceremony is perhaps unique in that the priests of another cult (in 1952, the cult of the Commodores from Vanderbilt in Tennessee) are invited to take part in the contest. Should the local priesthood be defeated, the ill-effects are evorvised with magic phrases, such as, "They just got the breaks," which imply a failure to propitiate that powerful deity Fortune. In

Georgia Tech's case, no such exorcism was necessary; the triumph of the local team served to heighten the ecstasy which had been previously induced.

It should be unnecessary to examine minutely the ritual involved in the actual contest; any handbook on football could be used as source material. With Tech, as with most of the leading teams in the country in 1952, a sophisticated form of rite was used, one that employed the platoon system, which calls for a functional division, special priests of offense and of defense. The actors in this mystery, like their predecessors in ancient Greece, wear special costumes. The shoulder pads, the padded trousers and the cleated shoes, like the sleeved robes and kothurni of Attic tragedy, are designed to raise the actors to heroic stature; the ostensible reason for this costume—protection for the player—becomes secondary as the ritual is observed from a distance. The helmet, particularly when it is used with the nose guard, has something of the function of the mask; it depersonalizes the player so that he, as a person, melts into the figure that he plays. There is a paradox here, however, for pains are taken to identify these faceless heroes by means of numbers attached to their jerseys. Of course, it is possible that the number identifies only the playing-field personality, that the 11, say, of Leon Hardeman represents only the fast, deceptive halfback in action on Saturdays, and not the indolent and seemingly disgruntled young man who appears, against his will, in English classes during the week; the mask of Heracles represents the hero and not the actor. The uniforms of the player priests, however, suggest not only the costume of the tragic actor. They also recall the padded jerkin worn by the characters in Greek comedy; the implications here are obvious.

The football ritual now appears to have reached a state of sophistication, which may be symptomatic of decay. In the early days of football, the players were men inspired by the strange ecstasy of school spirit. Now, although the contests continue to be held in honor of that deity, the priests are more nearly like skilled craftsmen. Where once the players received honor—the admiration of the male students, the adoration of the female students—they are now more likely to receive rewards—scholarships; special privileges; in some places, it has been suggested, salaries. The result is noticeable on the field. The games have become tighter, smoother, better organized; they approach an art form. Those old bursts of excess ecstasy, the razzle

dazzle, as the sports writers like to call it, have begun to disappear. Once in a while the accident of an intercepted ball or an unexpected hole in the opposition line reproduces these ancient effects, but the accidents are happening less and less often. From the standpoint of the spectator, the new ritual is more continually interesting than the old form in which the players often needed divine inspiration before they could score. It should be remembered, though, that as the Greek drama moved away from the religious ecstasy of its sources, it finally devoured itself in empty craftsmanship. Those high priests of the gridiron, the members of the NCAA, have perhaps taken warning from the Attic example; it is too early, however, to ascertain whether or not the new rule outlawing the platoon system will return the game to its primitive purity.

At Tech, the secularization of the old mystery is already beginning to affect those participants who are not playing on the field. Much of the old ritual is adhered to, but a deep belief in it seems to be missing. The neophytes, the freshmen, all wear small yellow hats with RAT, a strange totemic identification, written across the front. They wear them not only at the games, but at all times during the first quarter of their novitiate. These hats come into particular play, however, at the games; whenever the band plays one of the cult songs, "Ramblin' Wreck" or "Up with the White and Gold," the boys stand and wave their caps over their heads as long as the music is playing. A booklet for freshmen contains a long list of rules that informs the novice of his ritual duties; his behavior is then more redolent of form than spiritual content.

In much the same manner the participants go through the forms of the ancient chants, "Push 'em back, push 'em back, wa-a-ay back," or the supedibly spondaic, "Block that kick!" From across the field, the ritual is still impressive; the mingled voices seem to lift their mystic message and hand it to the spirit hovering above the priests. Yet an examination of the chanters through field glasses indicates an indifference to the chant and their own participation in it. About every third man sits completely still; the mouths of the others move in unconcerned deference to the correct forms. The yell leaders, who have resembled inspired chorous leaders, are, after the field glasses treatment, apt to seem anachronistic and a little silly.

A kind of sophistication has even begun to creep into the half-time presentation by the marching band. This display has always

served as a kind of parabasis between the two parts of the football drama, when the action is broken and the chorus speaks directly to the spectators. The speaking is done through the music and through the designs spelled out by the moving figures of the bandsmen. The messages were once simple and easily understood, a greeting, "Hello, Fans," or an exhortation, "Yea Team." Now the designs have become more intricate, the messages farther removed from the occasion; at the Homecoming Day under consideration here, the Tech band urged the spectators to contribute to the Community Chest, surely a confusion of ritual. The designs have become so intricate that a running commentary now accompanies the presentation; the ritual communication has disappeared and footnotes are necessary.

If the beginnings of decay can be found in the rites on the football field, at least one aspect of the Homecoming ritual at Tech retains its pure and primitive form. That is the Wreck Parade. This procession, a collection of carefully mutilated old automobiles, partakes of many of the elements that once marked the festivals of Misrule or the ancient revels associated with fertility rites. In many religious festivals, including those of the Pueblo Indians, an abusive, obscene, burlesque ritual accompanies the more formal rites. The Wreck Parade serves that function in the festival of Homecoming Day.

The event is sponsored by an organization called the Bulldog Club. The initiates, the bullpups, act as parade masters of this strangely frenetic ceremonial. Twenty-five centuries ago, the members of such a sect would have worn animal masks; now they are satisfied with a bizarre identifying costume—black derby, frock coat, white pants rolled to the knee, sneakers. They also carry long wires with rubber hotdogs on the end, a euphemistic analogy to the phallus of the old fertility processions.

Each automobile in the parade is sponsored by one of those cabalistic social anagrams, the Greek letter fraternities. The cars, usually aged to begin with, are systematically defaced with hack saws, blow torches, perhaps even can openers. The bodies become scalloped bits of metal; the tops disappear; the doors are removed and tied on casually so that they drag along as the cars move. All manner of mechanical perversions are practiced on the automobiles; motors are put on both ends so that the cars run in either direction without reversing or run madly in a circle; the automobiles are doctored so

that they steer from the back, from underneath, from almost any place but the driver's seat; they are fixed so that they rock, jump, and shimmy as they move. This conscious destruction of the laws of mechanical logic is, in a sense, a condoned blasphemy of the principles of the engineering school at which it takes place, but since the occasion is one of festival, the abuse is harmless; the abusers park their wrecks at the end of the weekend and return on Monday to the conventions of engineering education.

The Wreck Parade does not consist only of this mockery of automotive mechanics; it also figures as a lesser ritual in the celebration of Homecoming. The battered cars are decorated as pre-game symbols of the impending victory on the playing field. The final product, in each case, is built of bits and pieces of myths and rituals. Effigies of the enemy are displayed undergoing many forms of destruction; the stuffed figures are beaten, stabbed, burned, dragged along behind the cars. The occult power of the boiling cauldron and magic powders is invoked, for many of the cars carry containers that continually smoke, often in many colors. The *carte blanche* of the day allows for obscenity, more scatological than sexual. In the 1952 parade for instance, many of the cars bore toilet bowls; puns were made on the opposing team—Commode Oars; one car carried a bath tub in which two supposedly naked men were bathing. Material from irrelevant myths crept in; the Confederate flag was displayed on several cars. All of these seemingly unrelated elements, the ridiculous, the brutal, the obscene, add up, through the informing spirit of the day, to a ritual unity that gives the parade its significance as part of the greater festival.

Homecoming Day also embodies many minor rituals. The Cake Race, which gets its name from the prize awarded, is a freshman event—the rites of the novitiate. The fraternity parties and the Homecoming dance, variations on the komos, bring the festival to a close. Homecoming Day at Tech, having been born late, seems to have borrowed elements from many different religious festivals. The variant borrowings, however, enter into the celebration of the god, school spirit; Homecoming Day at Tech is genuine ritual in Georgia.

FOLKLORE OF OUR EARLY SCHOOLS

MILDRED HATCHER

A STUDY OF OUR early American schools presents an abundance of folklore. In the colonial period the education of children could be provided by the parents in any manner they chose. However, after a few years, laws began to be passed which made it obligatory that parents where schools were lacking should teach "their children and apprentices to read perfectly the English tongue." In 1647 Massachusetts made another provision of law, requiring any town containing one hundred families to "set up a gramer schoole, y master thereof being able to instruct youth so farr as they might be fitted for y university." Soon other colonies passed similar measures.

A "gramer schoole" was one in which Latin was the chief subject. The master's salary was meager and was usually secured by tuition. Thus, the master was faced with the uncertainty of his livelihood. Then, for about a hundred years most schools were kept in meeting houses, which were log buildings with a single door, a thatched roof, two windows, a chimney, and backless benches.

About the middle of the eighteenth century, with the growth of the scattered villages and the creation of school districts, the people preferred to spend on the district schools all the money raised for education; so the Latin grammar schools declined. However, the prevailing poverty and the loose government made it difficult to maintain an adequate school organization. Thus, many communities had no schoolhouse until the beginning of the nineteenth century, but rented a room in some dwelling and furnished it with desks and benches. In the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth, the typical district school buildings were constructed where there were no shade trees; for the chief requirement was that each schoolhouse be located in the center of its district. Therefore, often the school was by a church, which had been built where it could serve the greatest number of people. Thus, the number of pupils in a district was usually from forty to sixty students, for only one teacher; for families in those days were large.

The teacher was faced with many problems. Usually, it was her task to cut the weeds, or to get them cut, on the school ground and

to clean the building before the opening of the school. Inside, there were dull, bare walls unless she supplied pictures. The wood-stove in the center of the room presented many difficulties, too, as in the winter the children would insist on moving closer to the heat, often merely to sit by some friend for an hour of whispering. The double seats, that during the nineteenth century had replaced the backless benches, were similarly a source of annoyance, as they induced whispering, idle mischief, and the mixing up of books. Then, on some bench or stand there was a water bucket, with about two dippers, to serve all the pupils. The water was brought either from the school well, often polluted with many objects which had been thrown into it by mischievous boys, or from the well or cistern of the nearest neighbor. But, with a room full of thirty children, a bucket of water did not last long, and the desire for it led to a constant commotion. Besides, the toilets were out of doors, exposed to public view. They, like the stove, the blackboard, and the water buckets, were instruments by which children kept the teacher confused in trying to determine those in need; for there was one thing sure: if she should fail to diagnose properly the needs of some student, she would soon be visited by his complaining parent.

The students played outside until school time. Then at the teacher's call they probably ran pell-mell into the room and took their seats. However, the wise teacher, if afforded one, rang a bell, perhaps like the old fashioned dinner bell, or she may have rung the little bell that she used for calling and for dismissing a class, or she may have had to count, "One, two, three." In either case, the children lined up outside, and with the proper signals, marched in and took their seats, the boys one side of the room and the girls on the other, with the largest children on the largest seats in the rear of the room.

The opening exercise, consisted of the reading of the Bible, the Lord's prayer, and a song or two. After the devotion, the classroom work was begun. The teacher's load often consisted of thirty-three or more classes, as experienced by Mr. D. S. Domer, who states that in 1888 he heard thirty-three classes in 310 minutes, an average of less than ten minutes to each. As late as 1919, according to an old *Kentucky Teacher's Manual*, the teaching load consisted of twenty-one recitation periods. However, by this time the number of class periods had been reduced by combining the fifth and the sixth grades into one and the seventh and eighth grades into another. Thus, during the odd years there were no sixth and eighth grades.

Until somewhat after the beginning of the twentieth century, many teachers would make out a list of rules, such as "no whispering, no sharpening pencils, no throwing stones, no name calling, and no leaving the room without permission," and would either make a copy of them for each student or put the rules in some conspicuous place on the walls or on the blackboard. The students who disobeyed these rules were given many forms of punishments, some of which are these:

1. Forced to stand with his face in a corner of the room for a certain length of time.
2. Forced to stand on one foot.
3. Forced to stand with both feet within a small circle on the floor.
4. Forced to stand with his nose within a small circle drawn on the wall, or on the blackboard if one were available.
5. Forced to remain in their seats during part, or all, of the intermission.
6. Forced to remain in their seats before or after school.
7. Forced to wear a dunce cap and to sit in a front corner of the room.
8. Forced to do janitorial jobs, such as sweeping, dusting building fires, bringing in fuel, or taking out ashes.
9. Deprived of eating lunch until after school.
10. Forced to sit on a chair in front of the class or to sit alone in the corner for a week or two.
11. Whipped in the hand with a paddle or ruler.
12. Whipped with a switch or a paddle. Sometimes holes had been bored in the paddle to make the stinging more severe.
13. Slapped on the face with a bare hand.
14. Had hair or ears pulled, or both.
15. Forced to apologize to the person offended.
16. Forced to apologize to the teacher before the class.
17. Forced to copy a certain number of times on the board a statement, or a lesson, or a poem.
18. Forced to write "I'll never do it again" sentences from 100 to 1000, or perhaps more, times.
19. Forced to memorize certain selections or passages of literature, often from the Bible.

20. Sent to the principal for a licking with a yardstick, a razor strap, or a rubber hose.
21. Prohibited from participating in games, or sports for a certain length of time.
22. Forced to take to their parents notes telling of the misbehavior.
23. Forced to take a beating with a hickory stick.
24. Forced to copy a certain number of pages from the dictionary.
25. Forced to wear paper tails pinned on a dress or on pants for "tattle tales."
26. Forced to copy a list of words, to look them up in the dictionary, and to use each of them in a sentence.
27. In the more recent years, forced to stand in the cloakroom.
28. Forced to wash all the windows.
29. Had grades lowered each time any rule was violated.

One of the most unusual punishments I have ever heard of is one that Professor Harry Law related. An old-maid, school-teacher cousin of his, many years ago, had a boy in school who was so mean that he set another boy on a cow and tied the boy's legs beneath the cow, which ran wildly and finally got itself hung up on a bush. Fortunately, the victim astride the animal escaped being killed. Later, the teacher told the "bad boy" that if he did a certain thing again, she would put him into the old wood-stove that stood idle in the corner. The incorrigible one, as was expected, repeated the very act that he had been ordered not to do. Thus, the teacher took the eyes from the top of the stove, swept it out, and forced the boy to crawl into it and to stick his head through one of the openings. Then she closed the door and required the culprit to stay there in that position for fifteen minutes.

Often punishments were given for actions, such as drawing objects of nature, which today are considered praiseworthy. For instance, the one punishment that I can remember receiving during my first school year, which was in a consolidate three-teacher school, was a slap for my peeping at my drawings which I had in the back of my tablet. It was against the rules for anyone to engage in art work of any kind. Being a lover of nature, I so greatly treasured those roses, butterflies, birds, and flowers that I had made at home with my crayons, that one morning I smuggled a few of them into the class-

room. Trusting that no one would take notice. I took just one little peep at those priceless possessions, but I got caught. In a moment the teacher was standing over me, and I felt the stinging of my jaw from her firm hand as if I had done something terrible.

Among the rules laid down in the *Kentucky Manual for Teachers* were these:

1. Pay attention to small things.
2. Rule by the eye and tongue.
3. Assign plenty of work.
4. Keep Mastery of self.
5. Be persistent.
6. Develop "heart power".
7. Get rid of incorrigibles.

Corporal punishment stood in great favor. If it would not work, then the "bully" of the school was dismissed. Soon the teachers began to learn, though, to put students on their honor. In some communities the admonitions, "Do right," and "Make life worthwhile," sometimes sufficed, if the teacher used them wisely. However, in some districts even today a few of the old rules are still in use.

But school life did not consist entirely of subject matter and of rules. The children liked to play together on the playground, and their games usually included the following:

1. Dropping handkerchief.
2. Hopscotch
3. "Go in and out the Window"
4. "The Farmer's in the Dell"
5. "London Bridge"
6. Whip-popper
7. Annie Over
8. Hide and Seek
9. Sea-sawing
10. Baseball
11. Basketball, and other sports.

Also, the old-time schools brought together the people of the community. The Friday afternoon program was as regularly expected as

was the lunch hour or the recess, and such an occasion gave the older boys and girls in the neighborhood, and often some of the parents, somewhere to go. They listened to the devotion; to the old-time, elevating maxims; to the speeches, better known today as "Poetry Reading"; and the orations. Poems for certain occasions were greatly welcomed. Pantomines, too, stood in great favor.

Then there were the spelling bees, at which each of the two selected leaders stood in an opposite corner of room to head his line, which would consist of all the students and the patrons whom he would choose. Usually the teacher, or the teachers, gave out the words. The contest was to see which side could have the greater number of people standing at the close of the game.

A similar feat was the annual pie supper, which almost no school dared not to have; for the students and the parents looked forward to it from year to year. Furthermore, it usually brought in considerable money for the much needed library books, for basket balls, and for other necessities. For this event, the girls baked the pies and the boys bought them. Some sold as high as twenty-five or thirty dollars, and sometimes more; for no young man wanted another boy to eat pie with his girl.

Also, there were ice cream suppers, candy pullings, box suppers, plays, evening programs of various kinds, halloween carnivals, and stunt parties, as well as basketball games and baseball games, all of which were largely attended by people from miles around.

The smaller children greatly looked forward to the appearance of Santa Claus at the Christmas tree, lighted with candles, and decorated with popcorn and similar items contributed by the pupils, who had drawn names and brought a present for a classmate. Often they added a few gifts for their favorite friends and for other members of the family. Sorghum-molasses popcorn-balls were usually to be had, too. But best of all, perhaps, was the teacher's treat, which usually consisted of stick-candy, apples, oranges, and sometimes bananas.

Also, the attitude held by educators toward women presents a bit of schoollore. From ancient times, books had nearly always been considered unnecessary for girls. Clifton Johnson states that when in the sixteenth century a French lady wanted to establish a girl's school in France, she was hooted at in the streets; and her father called together four doctors of law to decide whether she was possessed of a

devil in planning to teach women. In like manner, early in the nineteenth century, when the father of Mary Somerville discovered that his daughter was studying, by herself, mathematics and other subjects, he said to his wife, "Peg, we must put a stop to this, or we shall have Mary in a straight-jacket one of these days."

In the seventeenth century, girls to some extent attended the public schools; but the most of them gradually dropped out. The early school laws did not recognize them at all, expressly stating that the word "children" is to interpreted to mean "boys." It simply was thought unnecessary that girls should be taught in public schools.

However, after the Revolutionary War public sentiment began to change, and by 1800 many places allowed girls to attend the town schools. Yet, advantages had to be granted gradually and with much opposition. At first, some towns would send boys home early in the forenoons so that the girls might come in for the time remaining. Also, they might attend on Thursday, the boys' holiday. Even these meager privileges were often omitted in the winter. Thus, the majority of the girls continued to rely on the summer district schools, where they were taught reading, writing, spelling, and polite behavior. In addition, they did some knitting and sewing; and each made a sampler, which was either a square or an oblong piece of cloth on which it was customary to stitch verses similar to this:

"This needle work of mine can tell
When I was young I learned well
And by my parents I was taught
Not to spend my time in nought."

When girls began to go to the master's schools, the ambitious ones ventured into geography, grammar and mathematics, but the more ignorant ones derided them for doing so. However, some of the girls attended private "finishing schools", to cultivate ladylike accomplishments. Here they were taught a little French, the art of embroidery and other fancy needlework, dancing, and elegant manners.

About the beginning of the nineteenth century, girls' schools of serious intent came into being; and their high standards, and the success of their pupils, were very effective in breaking down the opposition to education for women.

The early private schools were largely denominational in control. Later, though remaining religious in nature, the academies became largely nonsectarian. They ranged from brick buildings, with a dozen or more rooms available for boarding the students, to such meager structure as that described in *Georgia Scenes*, by Longstreet:

"A simple log pen, about twenty feet square, with a doorway cut of the logs, to which was fitted a rude door made of clapboards and swung on wooden hinges."

Similarly, the old-time methods of determining whether a person was qualified for teaching are somewhat amusing. During the seventeenth, eighteenth, and much of the nineteenth centuries the employer seems to have been the sole judge to decide whether the school master, the school dame, or, in the South, perhaps the hired bondsman, was sufficiently qualified to take the job; but once employed, he had to please the parents, also. If there were complaints, he had to go elsewhere. As time moved on and our public school system developed, many empowered with the authority to select the schoolmaster came to feel that he should be tested in some way as to his fitness for his profession. This opinion was rather widespread by the close of the nineteenth century. An interesting experience is that of D. S. Domer, *History of Education Journal*, Vol V:

"I was tutored for my first county teacher's examination, which came in June, 1888.

On my way to the examination, I met the County Superintendent. We walked a half mile together from the train, and I have no doubt I won his sympathy, which may have stood me in good stead. There were then no uniform state examinations. The County Superintendent, chosen by the trustees of the school district, was the sole authority. At nine o'clock, the mill began to grind—operated by one-man power, the Superintendent. The first subject was arithmetic. The superintendent read a set of questions, prepared in advance in his office or propounded extemporaneously. About forty minutes were allowed to solve them. There were problems in mental arithmetic to be solved on the spot, and on one's feet. Sometimes only the method of solution was called for. When each candidate finished one examination, his papers were taken up,

read, and graded then and there by the official. All the nine common branches were treated the same way during the day. At last, the end approached. At four o'clock we would know our fate. If one passed, his name was called and a certificate was handed him. . . .

Thus, armed, I was ready, whether qualified or not, to enter upon the noblest work of man. . . ."

But, by the beginning of the twentieth century many states were requiring each county superintendent to choose a board of examiners and to administer each year such tests as the state should advise.

In reflecting the folklore of our early American schools, this paper has shown that in some of them little beyond a few bare rudiments of knowledge was imparted, that some of the teachers were ignorant and sometimes brutal, and that their methods were often mechanical and dreary.

However, from the "little red school houses" have come notable men; but their success was due to their own native energy and thrifty acquisitiveness, not to any great virtues of the schools. Yet, these schools have left their imprints upon our American way of life.

Austin Peay State College

BOOK REVIEWS

FOLKLORE IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

A Cat Came Fiddling and Other Rhymes of Childhood. Adapted and made into songs by PAUL KAPP; illus. by IRENE HAAS. New York: Harcourt Brace, and Co., c1956. 80 pp. \$3.00.

Rainbow in the Morning. By CARL WITHERS and ALTA JABLOW; pictures by ABNER GRABOFF. New York: Abelard-Schuman, c1956. [55] pp. \$2.50.

Riddles of Many Lands. By CARL WITHERS and SULA BENET; illus. by LILI CASSELL. New York: Abelard-Schuman, c1956. 159 pp. \$2.75.

A CAT CAME FIDDLING contains 58 folk verses, most of them familiar, set to music by Paul Kapp. I was delighted to find among them *Robin, the Bobbin* which our mother sang to us as children and which I had not since encountered. However, we said "Robin, the Bobbin, big-bellied Ben" (instead of "big fat Ben") which is probably nearer the original words of the folk-rhyme. Two musician friends, who work with children and tried the songs, feel that they are largely singable and will delight children of various ages, some being very lovely tunes. While the accompaniments are within the finger span of beginners, some might not satisfy a musician. Many tunes seem quite familiar, either based on or written in the spirit of old folk tunes, while others seem quite modern in spirit.

Irene Haas has done a good job with black and white illustrations on each page, depicting both human and animal characters as a child would expect to find them. There is a brief introduction by Burl Ives.

Carl Withers, already well-known in children's literature for his *American Riddle Book* and *A Rocket in My Pocket*, has produced two other books: *Rainbow in the Morning* (with Alta Jablow) and *Riddles of Many Lands* (with Sula Benet.) All three compilers are anthropologists and students of folk literature.

Rainbow in the Morning is a collection of rhymes of many kinds: counting-out and jump rope, spelling rhymes, tongue twisters and some rhymes just for fun. Some I had not thought of since as children we played to the chant of rhymes or read the few books of folk rhymes then available to young readers.

The large illustrations by Abner Graboff feature black, white, blue and yellow shading through orange to brown. Many of the pages are themselves full color and the large figures appear to have been done with a pair of scissors and construction paper. I believe children will enjoy them along with the rhymes.

Riddles of Many Lands contains "over 700 authentic folk riddles from most of the countries of the world" divided into six main divisions by continents, subdivided by countries. The four-page list of sources consulted attests to the amount of research that went into the compilation. As a result, young readers will thus have access to many riddles heretofore unknown, including some from the American Indians and Chinese, long thought not to have produced riddles. Naturally, riddles from various countries show similarity and it is too bad no index indicates such duplication.

The black and white illustrations by Lili Cassell are representative of various countries and the end papers have pictorial maps locating places from which the riddles come.

Riddles of Many Lands is for slightly older readers than either of the other books, though neither is limited in appeal even to children. These books add measurably to the fairly generous output of folk literature for young readers and will be of interest to parents, teachers and librarians working with children and books.

AZILE WOFFORD

University of Kentucky

The Book of the Wiles of Women. Translated by JOHN ESTEN KELLER. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1956. MLA Translation Series, no. ii. University of North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, no. xxvii. 60 pp.

UNTIL THE PRESENT VOLUME the English language had been lacking in a really good translation of that highly interesting collection of *exempla* known in Spanish as the *Libro de los engaños e los assayamientos de las mugeres*, itself having been rendered into Spanish in 1253 from the Arabic by Prince Fadrique, brother of Alfonso el sabio. This collection is one of the purest surviving representatives of that group of tales usually known as *The Book of Sindibad*.

In 1868 the Instituto Lombardo published an edition of *Los Engaños*, along with a study of the Sindibad tradition, by Domenico Comparetti. This was translated into English for the Folk-Lore Society under the title *Researches Respecting the Book of Sindibad* in the year 1882. With it appeared a translation of *Los Engaños* made by a Mr. Coote, but this translator did not possess a thorough knowledge of Spanish. His "apologies" to the reader are frequent. "I have omitted this unimportant part," he stated (*Researches*, p. 121, note), "where the Spanish text is hopelessly corrupt." And later: "I have purposely abridged my translation for obvious reasons." (p. 136, note)

Professor Keller, not being hampered by so-called Victorian niceties, has not omitted a single passage and in no place has he distorted the meaning. In making his translation from his own text, *El Libro de los Engaños* (Chapel Hill, 1953), taken from the only existing manuscript, Professor Keller prefers the literal rendition when possible, but attains at the same time a certain naturalness and smoothness not always found in the word for word translation. For example, this passage, ". . . e emamorose un omne della, e ella non se pago del; e estonçes maldixola aquel omne que la amava, e tornose luego perra." The English reads, "A man fell in love with her, and she was not interested in him. He put a curse upon her, that man who was in love with her, and she was changed instantly into a she-dog." This is very close to the Spanish and yet, the English is not lacking in smoothness.

Proverbs and proverbial phrases are more difficult for the translator. ". . . quien bien faze nunca se le muere el saber," is rendered into, ". . . good repute never dies for him who does good works." ". . . non a cosa peor que mentir mas que mas a los rreyes," is translated, ". . . there is nothing worse in kings than deceit." And ". . . tu muerte a ojo," becomes in English, ". . . in the face of death."

In brief, *The Book of the Wiles of Women* of John Esten Keller will be of great value to Hispanists, to students of comparative literature, and especially to all those interested in the Sindibad cycle. In

addition to his fine translation he is to be commended for his stimulative and informative introduction to the work.

J. H. JOHNSON

University of Kentucky

Cecil Sharp. 2nd ed. By A. H. FOX STRANGWAYS and MAUD KARPELES. London, New York, and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1955. xviii, 226 pp. Plates. \$4.00.

THE DEATH OF CECIL SHARP in 1924 ended an era of English folk-song collection. John Goss recognized this when he wrote in 1937, "Since the deaths of Cecil Sharp and Gavin Greig, the only work of consequence on matters connected with British Folk Music has been done in America." As Margaret Dean-Smith phrased it later, there was no second generation "equal in enthusiasm, learning, and scholarship." These statements are no longer true, as shown by the recent work of such students as A. L. Lloyd, whose interests are wider, if not deeper, than those of the Folk Song Society. But the reappearance of the biography of Cecil Sharp, originally published in 1933, seems symptomatic of the continuing strength—or lack of it—of the second-generation Folk Song Society.

This reviewer wishes to belittle neither the achievements of Sharp nor the value of the biography. The mere reprinting of the volume would have been a service. Yet, in view of the adulation of Sharp which has become almost a cult, the fact that we have not a *reappraisal*, but a new *edition*, seems significant. The changes in the second edition are relatively minor and, though generally improvements, do not alter the tone or meaning of the book.

Perhaps the most important changes are the elevation of Maud Karpeles to her rightful place as co-author and the addition of an introduction which supports the "freezing" of folk music at the level which Sharp accepted. There are somewhat more than thirty minor alterations in text: (1) correction of proof errors; (2) additions or changes to bring notes or summaries up to date; (3) improvements in style; and (4) omission of the nonessential material in the three appendices of the first edition. The alterations have been made so skillfully that there is hardly a difference in pagination between the

two editions. Only a few changes are of any importance. Giving reasons for the "inevitability" of Sharp's "editing" of *Folk-Songs from Somerset*, Miss Karpeles adds "the irregularity of rhythm in the corresponding lines of the successive stanzas" and suppresses the statement that when a song is obscene "it was Sharp's opinion that the song was of individual, not communal, origin, and that this individual was often the ballad maker who hawked the songs about. . . . This view gains a little support from the fact that in the Appalachians where the broadsides did not exist, sentiment of that kind is not known in the songs" (p. 50). The survival of the "longways" dance "in certain rural districts of America" becomes "in trans-Atlantic form on the continent of America" (p. 99)—but the chapters on Appalachian collecting remain unchanged. There is a new and more appreciative judgment of Sharp's composition (p. 115) and additional comments on the relation of the folk dance to ritual (p. 105). *Cecil Sharp* is a better book, but not a new book.

The new edition is an additional indication of the renewed interest in Anglo-American folksong. But it seems to indicate that for the necessary revaluation of the work of one of the greatest of folksong collectors we must look elsewhere. The Folk Song Society has learned nothing and forgotten nothing.

D. K. WILGUS

Western Kentucky State College

American Folk Tales and Songs and Other Examples of English-American Tradition as Preserved in the Appalachian Mountains and Elsewhere in the United States. By RICHARD CHASE. A Signet Key Book. New York: The New American Library of World Literature, c. 1956. 240 pp. 50¢.

FISHERMAN HAVE NOTED the difference between armchair angling in other men's ponds and whipping wild water for the finny prey. And gourmets have remarked upon the superior taste of fry caught swimming in live streams. These differences of catch and taste are also true of folklore.

One of the first qualities in Mr. Chase's introduction and his head-notes is that of immediacy and familiarity of contact with his sources.

A meticulous scholar may take exception to a few fuzzy references, like that to "little pockets of Elizabethan culture isolated in remote mountain hollows" (of the Appalachians) and to "After seven hundred years" (from Chaucer's time); but he will perceive that Mr. Chase has been about and lived among the folk, knowing them well and enjoying their confidence and liking, and has read much of the best that has been thought, said, written, and done in the field of American folklore. The notes are brief and lively, designed to inform and interest the reader rather than to display the learning of the editor. And the material itself has the authentic words and tune of folk speech and song. Indeed, Mr. Chase can and does tell the tales and sing the songs as he learned them, without book or notes, preserving their waywardness and tang, and they communicate themselves in that way from the book to the reader. At Boone, last summer, he gave the writer of this review a tape-recording of "The Hickory Toothpick," holding the book in hand but not once opening it, and on a previous occasion he recorded "Jack and the Giants" from memory. So with the songs: Mention one, and he will sing it. In the book he has made a fair division between the tales and the other types.

Of the four groups of tales, the first includes, for the most part, those of Old World origin, like "Wicked John and the Devil" and "Rush Cape" (a Cinderella variant), that are true folktales, orally preserved and accommodated to a New-World setting. Two of them, "Pack Down the Big Chest" and "The Man in the Kraut Tub," are reminiscent of Boccaccio and Chaucer but have been thoroughly Americanized in their language and local traits. The first begins by explaining, "The step-husband, you know: he's the one that steps in when the real husband steps out." To the references to occurrences of another story, "Catching a Thief," I should like to add a version of it in my *Humor of the Old Deep South* (New York, 1936, pp. 222-224), told as an anecdote about a famous pioneer preacher, Lorenzo Dow. Many of the "Five Jack Tales" have appeared in Mr. Chase's previous book, *The Jack Tales*. They are exquisite examples of drollery and tangy folk speech, superior in their dialect to the recent Library of Congress recordings. "The Fool Irishmen Tales" illustrate a wide variety of stories on this theme which have long been popular in the South. "Pat and the Mule Eggs" has been reported by Boggs. I miss the one about Pat's chore of feeding the mules corn *in the ear*, with disastrous consequences, and the one about

Pat's first experience with sugar-cane ("tastes foine, but domned hard to swaller"); but I don't doubt that Mr. Chase knows them. Of "Tall Tales," I prefer "The Hickory Toothpick."

The "Ballads, Songs, and Hymns" section, with music, is nicely weighted. The ballads include eight of the Child type, the lighter, more singable ones, like "The Devil's Questions," the rare "Bold Robin Hood," and "Old Bangum"—all to attractive tunes (Mr. Chase loving to "sing a ballad lively"). The "Songs" range from "The Darby Ram" to "At the Foot of Yonder Mountain." The "Hymns" number the noble "Garden Hymn" and the moving "Jesus Walked in Galilee." "Songs to Sing Your Children," with "The Swapping Song" and "Cock Robin," should make the book a household favorite. This section closes with "Songs Sung by Ora Canter," in the shaped notes. Two by this blind singer are "The Little Family" and "Will the Weaver."

The remainder of the book is devoted to sections entitled "Games and Country Dances" (with full directions and music), including the elaborate "Tennessee Wagon Wheel"; "Fiddle Tunes" (among which I am pleased to note "Natchez on the Hill"); "Odds and Ends," with the remarkable "Deaths on Three-Mile Creek"; "Jokes," with the delightful "That's Once," which Mr. Chase once recorded for me; a useful "Amateur Collector's Guide" which carries with it the authority of one of the best practitioners; and a brief "Suggested Further Reading."

Though *American Folk Tales and Songs* does not have a great deal of new material in it, all that it does have is *fresh* and in the best tradition and idiom. Thus it will interest the folklore scholar and "the common reader," if not alike yet keenly. The line illustrations and the simple musical notations are attractive features. The scholar will be interested in the results, if any, of the three provocative lists on pages 233-34. It is to be hoped that some "Dramatic Dialogues" will turn up. I can report, whether "fully" or not, the song "known to exist, but not fully reported," beginning "Where are you going, my good old man? . . . my honey, my love." I tape-recorded it last summer from the singing of two charming Virginians, William Stephenson and Phyllis Kyle (now Mrs. William Stephenson), of Newport News. Whether it is "full" or not, it certainly has a convincing and conclusive climax—"A ha'nt can't ha'nt a ha'nt."

ARTHUR PALMER HUDSON

The University of North Carolina

The Screaming Ghost and Other Stories. By CARL CARMER. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956. xii, 146 pp. \$3.00.

GIVING FURTHER PROOF of his interest in American folk tradition, Mr. Carmer has brought together a collection of twenty-one tales of the supernatural featuring among other things reincarnation, the explanation of natural phenomena, the return of those murdered or accidentally killed, the appearance of ghosts portending evil events, and one brief excursion into folk theology. Several of the stories he selected from works of his published at an earlier date. A weird sketch in two colors by Irv Docktor illustrates each of them in striking fashion.

One has only to touch briefly on a few of the legends to realize the variety the author has achieved. He and one of his characters, an erstwhile artistic young intellectual turned business man in later life, share in recounting the tale of the Saratoga lady in red screaming at the height of the storm against a ghostly backdrop of Burgoyne's revolutionary redcoats. Notable for its pathos and tragedy, "The Singing River" explains the sound made by the Pascagoula River as the song of the Pascagoula Indians. Preferring death to enslavement by an enemy tribe, they march singing into the river as the tide rises from the Gulf, while the sea maiden chants "Come to me, Children of the sea." In pleasant contrast, "The Quaker Girl and the Rocking Ghost," a Pennsylvania legend, tells of the friendly spirit moving the rocking chair each evening and cheering up a shy girl in boarding-school, only to leave the latter's room forever when the young lady has made friends and become accustomed to her surroundings. "Harp Notes in the Mist" and the "Vision of the Falling Priest" are macabre though picturesque tales of pirate villainy along the Gulf coast. No collection would be complete without the tale of the vanishing hitch-hiker, versions of which are said to exist all over the western hemisphere. "The Lavender Evening Dress" makes the theme the major part of a tale which includes a number of other elements. An interesting example of folk theology, "The Wandering Nephite" also concerns a hitch-hiker who can foretell future events and who might be one of the three Nephites, permitted, according to Mormon legend, to live and continue their mission work until Christ's return. Some three hundred tales about them are reported in circulation.

These are only a few of the legends that would impress the reader of this rewarding little book. The tales are narrated in a matter-of-fact

way that lends much to their charm. Entertaining though he finds them, the true folklorist must wince, however, at the author's candid admission that he has supplied some of the corroborative detail for a few of the stories and that a number of them are the products of his imagination, especially since the former has no way of distinguishing accurately between the completely fictional and the more-or-less authentic. It fact the folklorist might well wish that Mr. Carmer had given somewhat freer rein to his unquestioned art as a story-teller, or that he might have presented each tale just as he heard it and omitted those items for which he alone is responsible. As far as the general reader is concerned, it would be hard to find a more pleasant way to spend an evening than to sit down for a couple of hours and become thoroughly immersed in this slender volume. Once again the author has scored as a persuasive master of narration with undiminished power to charm and delight.

GEORGE C. S. ADAMS

Wofford College

Motif-Index of Folk Literature, Vol. 2, D-E. By STITH THOMPSON.
Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1956. 517 pages.
Cloth. About \$14.00.

SCHOLARS AND STUDENTS of folklore, comparative literature, and of literature in general will be pleased to learn that the second volume of Dean Stith Thompson's great encyclopedia of motifs has been published. In this volume, which covers all the motifs in D (magic) and E (The Dead), many hitherto unclassified motifs appear. Section D contains 398 pages of motifs, while the first edition of the *Motif-Index* in section D had 329; section E in the present volume runs to 115 pages, and in the old *Index* there were only 98. Furthermore, the new *Index* has many more motifs to the page, and therefore the sections D and E, like sections A, B, and C in the first volume of the new edition, have twice as many motifs as the older first volume.

The new Volume 2 is free of a number of errors found in the first edition, the system of cross references has been improved and amplified, and the new abbreviations and signs used to designate new materials are clearer and less complex.

Whole new areas have been drawn upon for motifs. For example, the motifs in the *Romance of William of Palerne* and from the *Romans d'Aventur* can now be found; many motifs from the early Irish appear in sections D and E; motifs from Jewish, Spanish, Indo-Chinese, and from many North and South American tribes are now available. These examples, of course, are only a few of the many new sources now included in the *Motif-Index*.

Four volumes of the new *Index* are still to be published, and for this reason some scholars will prefer to use the first edition until all six appear. They would be wise to make use also of the first two volumes of the new *Motif-Index* also, in spite of the need of the final four volumes, for the new will make all studies based upon the old out of date and incomplete.

JOHN E. KELLER

The University of North Carolina

Half Horse Half Alligator: The Growth of the Mike Fink Legend.

Edited by WALTER BLAIR and FRANKLIN J. MEINE. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1956. ix, 289 pp. \$5.00.

HALF HORSE HALF ALLIGATOR is a book that cannot be reviewed without first at least partially reviewing another, for it is essentially and by admission of the editors an extension of, and companion volume to, *Mike Fink: King of Mississippi Keelboatmen*, written by the same set of collaborators and first published in 1933.

In the first book it was the purpose of the authors, and I closely paraphrase their words, to retell the yarns about Mike Fink without loss of flavor or damage to their strength or beauty. The earlier book contained a brief introduction which sketched in the proper historical-frontier setting for Fink's exploits and also included, as appendices, an epilogue, which further commented on historical background as well as the important contemporary sources of the Fink legend, a bibliography, which set forth the authors' intentions and method, and finally, a chronological list of the original sources and their reprintings. It was the body of the book, however, that was remarkable, for it was a strange animal indeed in its blend of history, biography, fiction, legend, myth, and folklore.

Mr. Blair and Mr. Meine were probably aware at the time that although the book was obviously aimed at a general, non-scholarly audience, it would receive scholarly notice, thus they characterized the work themselves before it could come under the pen of an academic reviewer. I quote from the "Bibliography" section of *Mike Fink: King of Mississippi Keelboatmen*:

To be on the safe side, librarians will perhaps do well to classify this work as fiction, but also biography, history, legend and, at rare intervals, poetry. The book's materials made this mixture necessary. . . .

Our first hope was that we might collect all original stories about our hero and print them in their most authentic forms. Persuaded that the work we contemplated could not be published at least at this time, we hit upon the expedient of writing a narrative which made use of the most important tales about him. . . .

The stories which dealt with Fink directly were the chief sources of what we have written. We attempted to bring together all the discoverable sources about the keeler . . . and to tie them together as well as possible. . . . In reviewing these tales we have tried to treat them with due reverence. . . .

There could be little complaint about any of this, for, although it may not have been the standard procedure of the scrupulous professional folklorist, it did produce an entertaining, unusual and highly readable book. We can in retrospect chastise the authors only for apparently bowing to the popular possibilities of the book by putting much of the important explanatory material at the end, rather than at the front as a preface, where it really belonged.

But so much for *Mike Fink: King of Mississippi Keelboatmen*. What, then, does the latest volume, *Half Horse Half Alligator*, represent? In a word, it represents the culmination of the authors' earlier intention; that is, it reprints the main written sources of the Mike Fink legend, makes comments on them, lists an extensive, up-to-date bibliography of original and secondary sources, and provides a forty-page introduction to the entire matter. Furthermore, everything has been done so capably and thoroughly that *Half Horse Half Alligator* should quickly become a standard reference for students of Fink as historical figure, person, or folk-hero.

In the meantime it is interesting to note how the latest volume reflects certain developments in the condition and status of folklore be-

tween the 1933 publication of *Mike Fink: King of Mississippi Keelboatment* and the present. As I have noted, the first work was basically a popular treatment with some scholarly apparatus and a limited amount of scholarly overtone. The new book is just the opposite. The fact of its publication by a university rather than commercial press (*Mike Fink* was published by Henry Holt) and the fact that the new book is unquestionably directed at the professional folklorist or, at the least, the serious student of folklore, indicates that in a period of little more than twenty years folklore in America has assumed the status and dignity of a discipline and a legitimate field of scholarly specialization.

Again, the ever-perceptive Messrs. Blair and Meine have, in their preface to *Half Horse Half Alligator*, acknowledged this trend and admitted its influence on their book. They have also, with admirable completeness, considered a good many other matters, for example, how the Mike Fink legend reflects the temper of the time which saw its birth and the psychology of the society which could make a hero out of such a callous, bigoted, braggardly, cruel, amoral, and scoundrelly drunkard. Finally, it is to the credit of the editors that rather than condone Fink's behavior, they explain how and why his attributes and activities qualified him as a fit subject for frontier folk-mythology.

Despite all due and deserved recognition for Mr. Blair's and Mr. Meine's yeoman efforts in researching the story of Mike Fink, we must realize that there is much left to be done, especially for the historian, who must now supplement the folklorist's work. Large parts of the story remain blank: for example the full and exact circumstances surrounding the birth and death of Fink, and the mysterious territory that lies between the legends of Fink's exploits and the truth about them. It may be that the impressive documentation which the editors offer is the last word on the subject; it is certainly the most authoritative so far, and if such is the case, then much of what we know about Mike Fink must remain forever legend or, to give it another term, folklore. In the meantime, it remains the reviewer's conclusion that Mike Fink was a thoroughly despicable rascal whose accomplishments as a marksman, importance as a keelboatman and frontiersman, courage as a brawler, and stature as a folk-hero did not equal the depravity of his character.

SHELDON NORMAN GREBSTEIN

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